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000 THE RUBBER TRADE AND THE MUNDURUCU VILLAGE

Chapter 2. ABORIGINAL CULTURE

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[Title page]

2. ABORIGINAL CULTURE*

121 The brief outline of the aboriginal culture of the Munduruc\u00fa which follows is based chiefly on traditional knowledge and the memories of informants, supplemented by the writer's observation of those features which are extant. Only slight reference has been made to historical sources due to their relative unreliability and also because of the absence of data in them on the socio-economic organization, which is our major interest in this work. This section does not pretend to be an ethnography of the Munduruc\u00fa, but will be focussed on the delineation of the basis of Munduruc\u00fa socio-cultural integration. It will thus provide a baseline for the study of Munduruc\u00fa culture change.

The Economy

10.5 [131] The Munduruc\u00fa are essentially forest dwellers. Although their aboriginal villages are located on high savannahs at the headwaters of the eastern tributaries of the Tapaj\u00f3s River, they depended on the resources of the forests and rivers for their subsistence. Their economy did not differ greatly from that of other Tropical Forest

* Because Munduruc\u00fa culture has suffered considerable attrition and because this culture loss has been felt in varying degrees in different areas of modern occupation, it is expedient to use the past tense throughout this chapter. It should be remembered that many traits still exist, especially those outside the realm of warfare and ceremonial. The later chapter on the contemporary Munduruc\u00fa will indicate what is now present or absent.

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105 tribes except in varying emphasis on different pursuits. Hunting, fishing, gathering, and gardening were and still are the basis of Mundurucú life.

Hunting

224 Of these four activities hunting and horticulture contributed more to the food supply than the other two. To the Mundurucú man, the proper daily activity was the hunt. The men were tireless and enthusiastic hunters and prized game more than any other food. Hunting, in aboriginal times, was done exclusively with bows and arrows and simple traps. The principal animals hunted were tapir (Tapirus Americanus), both the wild pig (Tayassu albirostris) and peccary (Tayassu tajassu), several species of deer, the paca (Cuniculus paca Acs.), monkeys, and birds. Wild pig is the most abundant source of game food in the Tapajós region. The men enjoyed hunting, but this must not obscure the fact that it is extremely exhausting work. The hunters left the village in the morning shortly after dawn and traveled long miles through the forests and across sun baked savannah before raising the tracks or scent of game. There then followed an arduous pursuit that sometimes lasted for hours. The successful hunter often ended his day by carrying a 100 pound wild pig on his back for three hours on the homeward trail to the village. Occasionally, he had to spend the night in the forest if he made his kill too late to return by daylight. The men hunted nearly every fair day except for those happy occasions when a great quantity of game was brought back to the village. All activity then stopped and the people sat around eating the

224 meat which would otherwise spoil after about three days.
[264] The pressure of maintaining a meat supply was great when one considers that a village of eighty people can eat one tapir or four wild pigs in twenty four hours.

Of all the Mundurucu hunting techniques, the collective hunts were most important. The usual system was for three or four men to go ahead with their dogs to raise and chase the game. The rest of the men waited along the path which the animal would probably follow in its flight, usually at a point where it crossed a stream, in order to ambush the fleeing beast. Needless to say this called for a great deal of teamwork in addition to an intimate knowledge of the country and the habits of game. The pursuing hunters informed their waiting companions of the specie of the animal by sounding signals on bamboo hunting horns. If the ambush was not possible, the dogs ran down the animals and brought them to bay, allowing the hunters to approach and make the kill. Although individual hunters frequently stalked game, the above techniques were most important for the killing of wild pig, the principal game food. Whereas it was possible for only three or four men to hunt the other animals, the entire male population of one or two villages might participate in a wild pig hunt. This animal always travels in large bands of at least twenty and up to fifty to one hundred pigs. Under these circumstances a single hunter could only kill one, or at best, two pigs before stampeding the herd, but a large group of men could surround the animals and kill a food supply sufficient for two or three days. Tapir, peccary, and

224 deer were also more effectively hunted in groups, not only because of the advantages of the ambush, but because an arrow wound is frequently not fatal, especially at longer range, and, if there are two or three hunters, the possibilities of successfully dispatching the animals are increased.

226 **Fishing**

Fishing was an economic activity definitely secondary to hunting, although as we will see later, the circumstances of acculturation have changed one large section of the tribe to a group which relies primarily on fish for proteins. The 361 aboriginal Mundurucú generally built their villages in places 723 several hours inland from the nearest navigable streams. Thus their defensive position was improved while in no way impairing their attacking power. This settlement pattern was well adapted to a warrior society, but removed them from the best 226 fishing sites. The small streams within easy reach of the villages yielded only smaller species of fish and in limited 501 quantity. That the Mundurucú relied little on the water system for food or transportation is shown by the fact that only in recent times has the dugout canoe been adopted on even a small scale. The usual modern Mundurucú canoe is of the double ended plank type made by the Brazilians and sold to the Indians by the rubber traders. In pre-contact times, the only water craft used was the bark canoe of the type described by Von den Steinen on the upper Xingú River.[8] Not even this canoe was native to the Mundurucú for they acknowl-

8. Steinen, 1894, pp. 222-223.

501 edge it to have been learned from their Tupian neighbors, the Apiaca. In early times, this bark canoe was used only to cross large streams when on a war expedition. Small [481 491] streams were crossed either on fallen logs or by swimming. Today, canoes are in greater use, but very few are owned among those Mundurucú of the savannahs.

226 132 An additional factor limiting fishing is that the annual rains cause the rivers to overflow their banks allowing the fish to disperse through the forest in search of fallen berries and fruits. During this season, fishing is very difficult throughout the entire rain forest region, even for those people having canoes. For the Mundurucú, who had to fish from the river banks, it was a sheer impossibility. The Indians of the present village of Cabruá complain that they have no canoes and that to fish during the rainy season would involve wading through the igapó, or flooded forest, impractical due to poisonous and constrictor water snakes, covered roots and logs, and the virtual assurance of failure.

226 Dry season fishing was done by two means. The first of these was to fish from the river bank with bow and arrow. To facilitate this technique, platforms were often built on the limbs of trees overhanging the water. The Mundurucú have great skill in fishing with the bow and arrow, and it [177] is still preferred to the hook and line, which was introduced by the whites and is only used during the rainy season when the fish are scarcer and at a greater depth.

226 [278] The second and equally important method was by poisoning the waters of lakes and medium sized streams with timbó (Paullinea pinnata), a fish poison used throughout the Amazon. The timbó paralyzes the gills of the fish, thus suffocating it. The fish remains edible as timbó does not poison the fish internally. The poison is contained in the long roots of a plant which grows wild in the forest but [249] which is commonly cultivated by the Indians in their gardens.

When a timbó expedition was organized, all of the men who participated went to the gardens to pull up the roots of the plant. These were chopped into one foot pieces, wrapped in a bundle, and brought back to the village. Before dawn of the next day, or the afternoon before, if the chosen fishing site was distant, the party embarked. The best places to fish with timbó were in restricted bodies of water where the poison would have greatest density and the fish the least possibility of escape. For this reason, streams and inter-island channels of about fifty feet in width or lagoons of limited size having only one entrance were preferred. Upon arriving at the location early in the morning, the party broke up into two, three, or possibly four groups, depending on the number of people involved. Those men who were to poison the water went upstream while the rest of the men and the accompanying women and children waited for the stunned fish to swim downstream. The poisoners then placed their bundles of timbó on a rock or log in the water and began to beat them with a heavy stick, causing the white

226 poisonous sap to be exuded into the stream. They occasionally dipped the bundles to wash out the sap more thoroughly. The excited cries of those waiting downstream informed them that the poison was taking effect, and, when the drug had been mostly beaten out of the roots, they went downstream to join the others in the collection of the fish.

The downstream scene was always one of sheer pandemonium. Everybody was usually in the water trying to catch the fleeing fish which were already semi-stupified by the drug. The women used handnets to scoop up the fish while the men impaled them with fishing arrows or clubbed them. At large timbó parties the water was poisoned by two or three separate groups at points about 1000 feet apart along the stream. As soon as the fish began fleeing downstream from the group furthest upstream, a sentinel stationed a short distance downstream gave several loud shouts to the next group, signalling them to start poisoning the water. The fish thus had very little opportunity to escape to pure water. To prevent any from making their escape, a dam made of branches set into the stream bottom was sometimes placed about a mile downstream from the fishing location. A space was left open until the morning of the fishing to allow the fish to swim upstream during the night. This system is particularly effective when fishing for the matrinchão (Brycon brevicaudatus Gunther) that swims up the smaller streams every night to sleep and then returns downstream with the coming of day.

226 These communal fishing trips were usually undertaken by the people of one village but occasionally involved hundreds of people from several communities. The efficacy of this system of fishing can be attested to by the writer who took part in one such expedition in which over one hundred people from four different villages participated and approximately three tons of fish were killed. The fish were pre-
[251] served by smoking, salting, and sun drying and remained edible for a period of one week to ten days. Modern timbó fishing
222 is done in the same manner as in aboriginal times. This is also true of the gathering of wild fruit, nuts, and berries.

Gathering of wild vegetable products

Gathering is and was the least important subsistence activity and food source among the Mundurucú and was often done incidentally to hunting, fishing, or trips to the gardens. Among the main articles gathered were several species of palm fruit, Brazil nut, the fruit of the cajú tree (Anacardium corymbosum), wild cocoa, mangaba, and several varieties of berries.

Those wild vegetable foods found only at long distances from the village were always gathered by the men on the way home from hunting, especially if they had been unsuccessful. When the fruit trees were near the village, one man or an older boy usually went out with a party of women, the boy to climb the tree and get the fruit, the women to carry it home. Climbing was done with climbing ring, a

222 [481] Climbing was done with climbing rings, a loop of vine passed around the feet causing sufficient pressure of the feet against the sides of the trunk to enable the climber to ascend the tree lightly by a series of jumps. For fruits located far out on limbs, hooked sticks were used to drag the limbs down or the climber chopped the limb off. These fruits were not a staple, but they were a valuable adjunct to the diet and a greatly appreciated delicacy.

241 Horticulture

Mundurucú gardening was done by the slash and burn method used all over the tropical areas of the New World. The garden was cleared of trees and underbrush at the end of the rainy season, the felled vegetation was allowed to dry throughout the dry season, and the plot was burned over before the first rains. Burned branches and the smaller trunks were dragged off to one side and the ground was then ready for planting after the first rains, usually in the beginning of September in this region.

Among the plants of New World origin planted by the Mundurucú were several varieties of bitter manioc (Manihot utilissima) and sweet manioc (Manihot aypi), yam (Dioscorea sp.), sweet potato (Ipomoea batatas), maize, beans, squash, pineapple, and pepper. At some time after the advent of the [177] whites in the Western Hemisphere such plants as banana, rice, potato, and sugarcane were introduced. Cotton, although native to the New World, was not adopted and used by the Mundurucú until the 19th century. The staple garden product and chief starch source of the Mundurucú was bitter manioc.

134
241 The agricultural land exploitable by each village was more than adequate, but it was by no means unlimited. Amazonian forest soil is generally of extremely poor quality. It is loose and friable and thus suitable to the simple digging sticks used by the aborigines in planting, but it lacks the colloids essential to hold the minerals in the topsoil. The result is that the minerals are leached into the subsoil by the heavy annual rains. However, there is some variation in soil quality even in this fairly uniform environment. Much land is unusable in Mundurucania due to being periodically inundated or because it is sandy, grass covered savannah. The tillable forest land is divided by the Mundurucú into black earth, red earth, and clay earth. The latter two are further subdivided if they contain a significant percentage of sand. Black earth is the best land and is usually the only kind in which squash, melon, beans, and rice can be raised. These crops can be grown with uncertain prospects of success in red earth while maize can be raised in both. The tuber crops grow in all kinds of soil. Since black earth is not accessible to all villages, the list of Mundurucú crops is often drastically reduced in certain locations.

241 The land cannot be used for more than two plantings and on the second planting, in all types of soil, only bitter manioc is raised. Certain crops, such as pineapple, replant themselves. The reason for this two planting system is obvious when one considers that bitter manioc matures in about eight months on the first planting and from fourteen to eighteen months on the second in the already "tired" soil. A third planting would yield little and, also, as the caboclo says,

241 "The jungle takes over by that time." Fortunately, there was adequate virgin forest or old second growth forest available to meet the needs of the population and they simply cleared new gardens. The usual system was for each man to have one garden in first planting and another in the second planting.

423 The rapid exhaustion of the soil and the plentifulness of new garden sites explains the absence of concepts of property in land among the Mundrucú. When the best forest lands within a convenient distance were exhausted, the village moved a short distance to the proximity of fresh soil. This occurred every five to ten years among the aboriginal Mundurucú, although the present depleted populations may remain in one site for from 40 to 50 years. The same causes that operated to make individual property in land meaningless apply on the family and village level also. In Mundurucú society there was no land holding unit. However, a definite feeling existed that the man who chose a garden site and initiated and directed the labor upon it was entitled to its proceeds. This man thereby became the "owner" of a completed garden, but not of the terrain itself. Even this was a very loose concept as food was freely shared among relatives and a person who, for some reason, did not have a garden was given food or allowed to take it from the garden of another.

241 476 Mundurucú horticulture involved a high degree of cooperation. The heavy work of clearing the forest was done by an all-village male work group. Each man who planned a

24/476 garden invited all the other men of the village to help him. He supplied the food, usually palm fruit and sweet manioc beverages, consumed while actually doing the work. The work was done under the general supervision of the man whose garden was being cleared. However, his directing activities consisted of little more than deciding the location and extent of the garden. The burning and final clearing of the garden were done by the owner, usually aided by other members of his household. He and his wife planted all of the lesser crops, but the planting of manioc was done for each garden by all of the people in the village as this was a more extensive operation and was well adapted to the labor of a large group. The men dug the holes for the planting of the manioc stalks while the women gathered and cut the stalks and dropped the sections into the holes.

24/462 Other crops were harvested as they ripened, but manioc, which can be left in the ground for a year, was harvested as needed. Almost all vegetables were gathered in from the gardens by the wife of the owner of the garden assisted by one or two women of her household, but the manioc was brought in by all the women of the household. The tubers were dug up from any one of the gardens belonging to the members of the household, processed by all the women of the house jointly and shared by all the members of the extended 252 family dwelling within it. Each house had one large flat stone that was used as a griddle to bake the flat cakes of manioc flour, or beijú, as it is called in the lingua geral.

252 Processing of manioc is a lengthy procedure and involves many stages. The women worked well together under the loose supervision of the oldest woman in the household-extended family. Cooperative labor allowed different women to be working in all stages of the process at the same time, thus expediting greatly the work in this, the most important female duty. In addition to the greater efficiency obtained, an onerous task was made pleasant, as the making of beiju was an occasion for chatter, joking, and gossip. The principal techniques of slash and burn agriculture are still used by the modern Mundurucu, but the above division of labor has been altered.

[476]

Distribution of food and manufactures.

264 476 As has been indicated, the distribution of foodstuffs within the Mundurucú village was very fluid. Beiju was produced and shared jointly by the members of the extended family and was further distributed to other houses according to kinship ties. There was only one cooking fire within each house, and fish and game were shared by all the members of the resident extended family. If there was an ample supply, the food was divided equally among the houses of the village regardless of kinship. However, when the day's kill was very small, a bird, a few fish, or a small animal, the nuclear family of the hunter ate the food themselves. This was exceptional.

Collectivity in food sharing is further highlighted by the fact that all the men of the village ate together in

264 476 the men's house. The women of each dwelling cooked equal amounts of the food to be consumed and it was then brought out for the common meal.

422 Although food was shared throughout the village, the same rules did not apply to personal property in material objects. This class of articles, including weapons, hammocks, ornaments, basketry, and pottery, was really the only category that corresponds with our own property concepts. These things might be loaned or manufactured especially for another person, usually a close relative, but rarely did one person claim a personal object from another as a gift. A highly desired object was occasionally asked for and, while sometimes given, was often politely denied with a suitable excuse. [574] It was not considered polite to demand something from another. [437] Objects were sometimes traded, but such barter was relatively [556] uncommon. There were no differences of wealth in the aboriginal society.

462 Division of labor

The main features of the division of labor have already been stated in the preceding discussion of subsistence techniques. It remains to summarize these into an overall picture of the structure of the Wuduruc productive system.

In common with most tribes of the region, the basis of the division of labor was sexual. There were no specialized occupations among the women and the only one among the men, shamanism, was hereditary, done without reimbursement of any kind, and without releasing the individual from production

462 in any way. The cleavage between male and female labor among the Mundurucú was especially deep. The men hunted, fished, and did only the heavy work of clearing and manioc planting in the gardens. They also made baskets, cord, musical instruments, tools, ceremonial objects, and weapons. The women did all of the other gardening work, processed manioc, cooked, tended children, wove hammocks, made pottery, and fetched water and firewood. The burden of the more onerous work fell on the women. The men had far more leisure time.

476 Within the sexes, and on occasion cross-sexually, cooperation was the keynote of the Mundurucú economy. Except for crafts, which were almost of necessity individual jobs, most of the male productive efforts involved people working as a group. This is not to discount the non-cooperative pursuits such as hunting by stalking and trailing, bow and arrow fishing, and the planting of minor crops, but the major work in hunting, fishing, and horticulture was done by numbers of men working in coordination.

342 476 Housebuilding was also a collective task in which men did the heavy work of construction while women and children aided in procuring and carrying thatch, light poles, vines, and clay for floors. Since housebuilding was almost always done only when the villages moved, every household helped the others in the task of construction. All the houses of the new village rose uniformly instead of being completed one at a time.

476 Among the women the same held true. The women made beiú together, harvested crops together and even went

636 ties to the end fetch water and firewood as a group. The latter three activities hardly demanded cooperation, but are illustrative of the fundamental division of the society on the basis of sex and of the love for sociability of the Mundurucú.

[57] The Mundurucú liked to do things together and it was a grave breach of etiquette to refuse to help in any work.

62/ 476 It will be noted that the village was the basic unit within which cooperation was carried out, while the extended family was of almost equal importance. Seldom did economic activities involve two or more villages. A man and wife occasionally left the village together for a few hours to plant or harvest vegetables or to gather fruits, but these occasions were of minor importance in the economy.*

476 559 Accompanying this emphasis on cooperation in the economy was a corresponding complete lack of stress on competition. Competitive economic activity was absolutely nonexistent. A lazy person lacked prestige but in this instance it was because a lazy person was a drain on the society.

559 Prestige was sought through accomplishments in warfare and knowledge of Mundurucú lore and not by economic means. Indeed, the Mundurucú did not openly seek to better anybody

[560] even in play with the exception of one strength test game, consisting of an attempt by each of two opponents to force back the forearms of the other, indulged in by the young people. In their speech the Mundurucú did not compare people

633 * It should be pointed out here that these conjugal excursions are generally viewed by the Mundurucú as guises to leave the village for the true purpose of daytime sexual intercourse. Their suspicions are well founded.

Rubber, even among the more acculturated Mundurucú, it is difficult to find out who collects the most rubber. This is [illegible] with lack of ego assertiveness, an important aspect of the Mundurucú modal personality.

Socio-Political Organization

Tribal Integration

Mundurucú society was integrated on a tribal as well as village level. The foregoing section on the subsistence economy has demonstrated some of the economic bases of local cohesion and a further analysis of village socio-political controls will follow. However, to place the village in proper context it would be well to first outline those factors that unified the various Mundurucú villages.

It should be stated first that no permanent tribal or multi-village political controls existed. Each village was an autonomous political unit. However, warfare, patrilineal clubs, and matrilocal residence combined to unite the villages very closely. The self-conscious cultural unity of the Mundurucú was recognized and described by Tocantins who referred to the Mundurucú as a "republic."[9] The Mundurucú felt themselves to be a unit as opposed to the outside world. When speaking of another Mundurucú they said "one of us" or "person" or when referring to themselves as a group they said "we are many." Everybody else was an "outlander," a category into which were lumped other Indians and white men alike.

9. Tocantins, 1877, p. 80.

197 101 The Mundurucú are clearly distinguishable by their speech, which is, despite its Tupian affiliation, mutually unintelligible with the language of their Tupian neighbors 302 101 and with the lingua geral. However, their most outstanding outward characteristic is the elaborate body and face painting which is the hallmark of all members of the tribe.

726 701 The chief multi-village endeavor was warfare. Warfare always was waged against other tribes and never [578 619] between Mundurucú villages. The idea of violence between two Mundurucú individuals or groups is abhorrent to this people. Internecine warfare would be unthinkable. We will discuss Mundurucú warfare in more detail further in this paper, but it suffices to say here that when a war party was being organized, usually by the chief of one village, invitations to join in the expedition were also sent to several other villages. The fully organized group was led by two of the [620] chiefs of the villages participating. These were men distinguished for their accomplishments in war and were nearly always older men. The other chiefs of the participant villages had a large role in the plan of action, as did all older men, but the position of the two leaders was recognized. Inter-village cooperation was the secret of Mundurucú prowess, as they defeated and scattered every tribe in the region and launched large war parties against the Portuguese fortresses of Santarém and Gurupá[10] and ranged as far east as the territory of the Tembé Indians on the east side of the Tocantins

10. Burton, 1948, p. 273.

Tapajos.[11] By drawing their warriors from a number of villages, the Munduruca were able to leave enough men in each village to support those women, children, and old people who were not able to leave. They were also able to amass a greater number of warriors, especially when it was necessary to face the Portuguese colonial troops that were sent against them in the late 18th century.

Such efforts called for a series of social linkages between villages. This was provided by the social organization which crosscut the society in two ways: by bonds of matrilocality and by the system of alks and moieties. This meant that those men of the village who came from other villages through marriage were linked to those villages by birth and by the residence there of the mother's family. Such linkages formed a chain whereby all villages ultimately were bound to one another by interpersonal ties. The bonds tying each individual to the rest of the society were further tightened by the patrilineal alk system. In most Munduruca villages, a person could find other members of his alk. To these people he had especially close ties and obligations, but he also considered all the members of his exogamic moiety to be relatives. Ultimately, but to a diminished degree, Munduruca of the other moiety were felt to be related and were called by kin terms. The people themselves say, "We are all kin, one of another."

11. This was reported to the writer verbally by Dr. Darcy Ribeiro, Chief of the Section of Studies, Brazilian Indian Protection Service. Dr. Ribeiro has conducted extensive ethnographic research among the Urubu and heard of these attacks from his informants. This confirms Martius' report of the same event (Martius, 1867, p. 234).

619 [719] Tribal integration was also aided by the ceremonial cycle, which in nearly all cases brought people from a number of villages together in a host village. Despite the lack of central political controls the Munduruú can be called a tribe in that they were united by interpersonal connections and were able to act as a political entity under temporary political controls.

The village

361 [64] At present there are eighteen Munduruú villages having an average population of fifty to sixty people. The balance of the population of 1800 are living in isolated groups usually consisting of one small extended family or, at times, only one nuclear family. It is impossible to judge exactly how many villages there were in earlier times or what their populations were. The shifting settlement pattern makes a plotting of old villages indecisive and the climate and vegetation destroy all vestiges of abandoned villages after about twenty years. The sources are next to useless on this point. Tessmann, one of the few men who reported on a trip to a 19th century Munduruú village, states that the village of "Serodamus" (Dekodyen is the correct transcription) consisted of five houses and a men's house.[12] He had previously cited the statistics of one Joaquim Correa, then Director of the Indians of the Tapajós River, to show that this village had a population of 2100, a patent absurdity.[13] The best estimate based on informant data gives a maximum population

12. Tessmann, 1977, p. 102.

13. Ibid., p. 101.

361 of 250 to 300 for the old Munduruku villages.

The aboriginal Munduruku village consisted of three to five dwelling places and the men's house, or ekxa.* The average population was about 250 people. Commonly, these villages were located on stretches of high savannah. Such a site was easily defensible as its open location protected it from the surprise attacks always used by Amazonian Indians. Also, these locations were relatively free of insects. The [371] Munduruku say too that "It is beautiful here for you can see far."

362 The houses were oblong with rounded ends and had steeply pitched thatched roofs. Some houses were 80 to 100 feet in length. The eaves of the roofs terminated at about five feet from the ground and the house was closed by vertical bark walls. Doors made of the center stalks of palm fronds were used.

364 The men's house was a large lean-to type building, the open end of which always faced east. It was up to 100 feet long and had a roof that gently sloped from the east end, at which point it was about fifteen to twenty feet high, until it met the ground at the west end. The front and both sides were open. Adjoining the south side of the west end [373] of the men's house was the small room in which the sacred trumpets, forbidden to female eyes, were kept. Three horizontal beams, one in the middle and one on either side of the house, ran from east to west at about five feet above

[374] * The phonetic system used above and throughout this work is, with a few exceptions, that of English. The exceptions are: ẋ is pronounced like the German ch; l and n are pronounced as in Portuguese lata and nata, respectively.

344 the ground. Between these beams, the men stretched their hammocks to sleep.

361 Like all Tropical Forest Indian villages, the Munduruc\u00fa village shifted location every five to ten years due to the exhaustion of nearby stands of high forest in which to make gardens. Each village had a definite area, usually a certain savannah, in which it moved. After 30 to 50 years a new forest cover on previously used land made it adaptable to horticulture again. Today, the reduced population of the contemporary villages makes frequent village shift due to lack of garden land unnecessary, but a new village is built every ten years due to the rapid decay of the houses, and also because the immediate environs become overgrown with weeds that are soon infested with insects and snakes. The locale of the new village was chosen by common consent, and the houses were built collectively. The last structure to be 344 562 built was the men's house. Until it was built the flutes were kept in the old men's house.

The men's house

The Munduruc\u00fa exhibited the most complete development of the male-female social division and accompanying men's house complex to be found in South America. Among the Camayura, the men's house is a ritual center.[14] Among the Bororo, it serves this function and is also a bachelor's and young men's sleeping quarter.[15] However, all the Munduruc\u00fa males from the age of about seventeen, worked, gathered and held council,

14. Oberg, 1953, p. 84.

15. Colbacchini, 1942, p. 38.

344 562 ate, and slept in the men's house. The men's house, outside of the flute chamber, was not rigidly prohibited to women, but very few entered and only on specific business. The dwelling houses were visited frequently by the men for occasional eating, to see their wives, to play with the children, or for a drink of water. However, the axis of the man's life was the men's house and that of the women the dwelling. Boys stayed with their mothers until they had finished being tattooed and were old enough to go to war, events that occurred concurrently at about the age of 17. Male solidarity in work and war was basic to Mundurucú culture, and the men's house was the primary institution in expressing, effecting, and perpetuating this cohesion. The married men of the village, many of whom were native to other villages, were effectively welded into a unit by the men's house. The young bachelors who might someday leave for the villages of future wives would similarly find a familiar matrix in the warrior group of their new village.

342 [593] 254 The dwelling house, as has been noted, was the residence of the matrilocal extended family. Each house had one very large hearth and the griddle on which the beiju was made. Cooking was usually done communally. Game was placed on a large babricot and roasted for all the members of the family. If the food was to be boiled, it was put in a large clay pot around which the fire was built. When the 264 men wanted to eat, a man from each extended family went to the house and brought that house's food contribution back

264 to the men's house. A loud whoop signalled to the other men that the food was ready. Due to their hunting activities, the men usually ate in the morning and at night. The women and children ate small portions all day long if there was food in the village. When the men were in the village they often joined in these small repasts between the meals taken in the men's house.

592 The dwelling house

Whereas the primary locus of male social life was the village men's house, that of the female was the dwelling. Each dwelling had a headman, the husband of the oldest woman in the female line represented in the house. However, the focus of his activities was the men's house and the coordination of female activity was in the hands of his wife. He was a man of prestige and influence in the house and village, but his wife always insisted that it was she who told the other women what to do and not her husband. In general, the Mundurucú woman worked harder than the men, but she was by no means dominated by them. She had certain duties that she knew were those of the women and she knew how to do them and when to do them. It was not the place of the male to interfere except if she was lazy.

The interior of the house was completely unpartitioned. Each woman and her children occupied a given section of the house where her belongings were kept. Closer relatives, such as true sisters, usually hung their family's hammocks adjacent to each other. Only if the husband was sick and

592 needed the attention of his wife did he hang his hammock in the house.

593 The nuclear family within this context was clearly a less important social unit than the extended family. Its most important functions were, of course, procreation and the raising of children. The man always brought his game to his wife, but unless it was only enough for a few people, it was cooked and shared by the whole household and even the village. Man and wife performed small personal services for each other, but these could easily have been done by any other member of the opposite sex. Since the children grew up in a large family, a great deal of their upbringing was entrusted to other members of the household. By the age of five years the boys were already incorporated into groups 867 of their age mates. The younger children usually played in the village, but the groups of boys over eight years of age began to range out on the savannahs and in the smaller stretches of gallery forest, shooting small birds, gathering fruit, and bathing in the streams. The boys had great freedom and a minimum of parental supervision. Only when they were about twelve years of age did they begin to become a part of the adult economy and even this was only in certain tasks such as garden clearing, planting, and fishing. After they were married and had achieved warrior status they became fully functioning members of the community.

Girls began to help their mothers in all of the female chores at an early age, but served especially to tend the smaller children when the mothers had to work outside the village.

000 the village. The children were reared in a stable group
855 that provided a large degree of emotional and economic security. The Mundurucú were and are devoted parents, and there was great affection between parents and children. However, the sudden death of both parents would have caused no great change in the social and economic life of the child.

Marriage

584 Marriages were sometimes arranged for the children by the parents when the children were still very young. Most of these arrangements were made between brothers and sisters for their children and were within the pattern of inter-moiety, cross-cousin marriage. The parents of either the boy or girl could take the initiative. In many cases, a young man who had developed a desire for a girl either asked her father and mother for her directly or used the intermediary of his own parents or older relatives. There was no gift exchange or bride price or service involved. If
585 the match was found suitable by both families, the young man
591 merely moved to the girl's village and took up residence in the men's house there. If he married a girl of his own village, as was often the case, he merely changed his household affiliation. He had socially recognized sexual rights to her and became a part of the economy of her household.
[836] In most cases, the man and woman had entered into sexual relations with each other before the marriage. If the young man had lived in the same village as his wife, the social recognition of the bond caused little change in the life of the couple or their families. The man began to bring

585 his game to the house of his bride and the products of his
591 garden went to the new household. He didn't even have to
586 move his hammock. Marriage was unstable especially in its early years before children were born to the couple. However, separation frequently occurred even between couples with two or three children. In these cases, the man went back to his old village or house affiliation and the children stayed with the mother. The commonest causes of marital breakup were laziness or infidelity on the part of the wife, in which case the husband might simply gather his hammock, weapons, and personal belongings together and leave. The same reasons on the part of the husband might cause the girl's family to turn the husband out of the household. Her relative lack of mobility made it difficult for the female to take the initiative in these cases.

595 Polygamy was not commonly practiced among the Mundurucú and the number of wives in such unions never exceeded two. It was generally confined to the chief of the village since the chief and his sons were exempt from the rules of matrilocality. The sons of the chief remained members of the father's household and their brides were incorporated into it. Usually the second wife was taken at some considerable time after the first marriage and often only when the first wife grew too old to fulfill her economic functions. A situation akin to polygamy often existed when a man took a new wife before taking his leave of the old one. These episodes were usually stormy. There was frequently bitter hostility between the two wives if they shared

595 the same residence or village. There is no evidence that polygamy was ordinarily sororal nor did the sororate and levirate have significant occurrence. None of these traits, so common in many primitive societies, was felt to be obligatory or even especially desirable.

684 Adultery was common and a frequent source of strife in the village. The men regarded their own adulterous escapades as highly diverting, harmless adventures. However, they did not take so lenient a view towards those of their wives. A husband whose wife was unfaithful usually beat her and verbally harangued her. No physical action was taken against the offending male, although an argument might ensue. 586 When the wife became so promiscuous that she lowered her husband in the eyes of the community, he left her. The woman whose husband was unfaithful had little recourse except to fight with him and, as one female informant said, "go out and do the same thing myself." If the husband's behavior became outrageous to the wife's family he might be invited to leave. The problems of sex caused few open ruptures in the Mundurucú village, but they were always a source of ill feeling.

614 The sib-moiety system

The Mundurucú social organization is rather complex for a Tupian group. They had thirty eight sibs divided into red and white moieties. The red moiety had sixteen sibs while the white had twentytwo. Of these thirty eight, eight are already extinct and my informants indicated that there were several more old sibs that they could no longer remember.

614 The existence of the sib system was first reported by Mme. Agassiz in 1865[16] and was more thoroughly described by Fr. Alberto Kruse, O.P.M. in 1934.[17] The latter reported only thirty four sibs, but this is understandable by the fact that no one Munduruc̃ú can remember more than twenty five to thirty. In addition, these sibs were grouped by now obscure linkages into unnamed phratries. For the purposes of this paper, it will be unnecessary to give a list of the sibs and their affiliations. Sib and moiety membership was inherited in the patrilineal line. The exogamic moieties were the ultimate marriage regulators as they subsumed the sibs in this function. There were no other exogamous groupings.

Totemic features were generally lacking in the Munduruc̃ú sibs. Each sib was named for an animal, plant, 784 or fish but there were no taboos on the killing or eating of the fish or animals. However, they were vaguely considered to be ancestors, or "the old people," a term that is also applied to the people of the mythological age. Kruse reports 773 the myth that the various sibs in ancient times were warring tribes that were united to form the Munduruc̃ú tribe and were given names and ancestors by the culture hero, Karusakaibõ.[18] My informants could not confirm this myth but said merely that the Munduruc̃ú were already existent and that Karusakaibe divided them into sibs and assigned ancestors to each one. The Munduruc̃ú term for these sibs is <u>diwat</u> (literally,

16. Agassiz, 1869, p. 320.

17. Kruse, 1934.

18. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 51-52.

614 "dwellers of the river"). The Aru (parrot) sib is referred to as arodiwat, or "people of the river of the parrot." There was no legend of a geneological descendancy, but each sib recognized its eponymous object as their particular "old person." In addition, many sibs had other "old people" who were linked with the sib through those sacred trumpets belonging to it. These ancestors were spoken of as "companions of the trumpets." Sibs whose trumpets had one or more of the same companions were considered to be more closely allied to each other than to the other sibs of that moiety. This linkage was so close in some cases that the members of one were considered the members of the other. During my residence in Cabruá a young Mundurucú man of that village used the sib names of both Karu and Kaba because they were linked. Another case in Cabruá was that of a father who had so many sons that he assigned the last two to another sib in his phratry that had suffered from a decline in membership.

614 344 All of the external manifestations of the sibs were to be found in the men's house. It has already been mentioned that there were three horizontal poles supporting two rows of hammocks in the men's house. This division was not arbitrary for in the north row of hammocks slept the men of the white moiety and on the south row, those of the red moiety. Also, within this moiety division, each man slept adjacent to his fellow sib members and then fellow phratry members. On the upright posts of the red moietie's side were painted the crests of the red sibs and on the other side of the men's house, those of the white. These crests,

614 simple geometric and slightly curvilinear designs, were
344 painted there by members of the sib depicted, at the time of the erection of the men's house.

614 The sacred trumpets, called karõkõ, embodied the
534 souls of the "old people" of the sib owning them and also had their own proper souls. These spirits exerted a benevolent influence over the village, but had to be offered food and periodically played in order to maintain this protection. Each village had a set of these trumpets and each one was the property of a certain sib. No special supernatural benefits accrued to the sib owning the trumpets. They were the property of a certain sib only because they took the sib membership of the man who made them. The important thing was that they contained the spirits of "old people" and not that they embodied the ancestors of any particular sib.

614 The sibs had no particular functions in the sense of duties or privileges. They served mainly to integrate the society by firm and formalized intervillage kinship bonds. They integrated the whole tribe, but were expressed by outward symbols in the village men's house. The above mentioned arrangement of hammocks in the men's house indicates that sib and moiety membership served to integrate men from various villages. In marriage regulation, the clans were superceded by the moieties. The moieties also buried each other's dead and had certain reciprocal ceremonial duties.

622 Political organization

Each Mundurucú village had an hereditary chief of limited power. In addition, each house had a recognized

leader. Descent was in the patrilineal line, with the chief's brother the first in line of succession, or, if no brother was available, the chief's eldest son. One of the chief's sons-in-law who resided with him could succeed if there was no son or if the son was too young or otherwise unsuitable. The chief's sons were exempt from the rule of matrilocality and usually brought their wives to their father's house. This resolved the obvious conflict between patrilineal succession and matrilocality. It also increased the prestige of the chief, for his brothers and their daughters and husbands and his sons and daughters and their families lived in his house. The chief's extended family thus tended to be the largest in the village. The kinship bonds between the male members of the chief's family made this the most cohesive group within the village in addition to being the most populous. In cases of disagreement they could usually be counted upon to back up the chief. They formed an ingroup that was the nucleus of the village, but one towards which there was often substantial suppressed resentment.

The chief was known as the ichõngõp, meaning specifically "chief," and also as the anyokokukat, or, literally, "owner of the village." The suffix "kat," in addition to denoting ownership, implies also, "one who takes charge." Thus, it is suffixed to words denoting material objects and also to names of ceremonies where leadership is clearly indicated.[19] The word for "chief" clearly conveys the latter

19. Among the Tenetehara, ceremonial leaders are also referred to as "owners" of the festivals (Wagley and Galvão, 1949, p. 123).

622 significance. The undisputed right of the chief to his position was recognized by the Mundurucú as a function of the uninterrupted occupation of the village by his family. The chief and his lineage thus gave continuity in time to the village and served as a stable element in the community, the male population of which was subject to considerable flux. The importance of the chief as a symbol of the village as a corporate entity can be derived from the attitudes of some informants who when asked why a certain village was abandoned would almost invariably reply, "The chief died" or "The chief died and there were no more old people left."

The chief's actual powers were vague. He had a position of prestige and his word was respected in decisions of a community nature, such as the choice of a new village location or the time and place of a timbó fishing trip, but he did not make unilateral decisions nor did he assume a role of direct authority at any time except in war, and then it was principally on the warpath and outside of the village that his authority was felt. The chief was generally an older man. Thus, he combined the two features of greatest importance in the Mundurucú prestige scale, age and eminence in warfare. If he happened to be a shaman, this would enhance his status even more.

623 There was no formal system of village council among the Mundurucú. The community decisions were discussed in the course of conversations in the men's house. The chief

623 and house leaders and other older men of the village had the greatest influence in these matters for it would have been highly impertinent of the "children" (as anybody under the age of about 35 or 40 was called by the older men) to contest the wisdom of those who were collectively referred to as "the old men."

624 The house leader was simply the oldest man of the house and generally the husband of the oldest female, who occupied the respected position of older sister, mother, and maternal aunt to the other women of the house. He was a man who married into the village, or at least the house, from outside and his position was the result of circumstances rather than selection or heredity. In our discussion of the household organization and economy, it became clear that the house leader did little to direct the activity of the women. His sons-in-law treated him with the respect due an older man and a father-in-law, but, since most of their activity was carried out in the larger unit of the village, he exerted little authority over them.

476 571 The leadership of collective enterprises was generally invested in the person who initiated the activity and not in the chief. If a man wanted to organize a tiabó fishing trip, he notified the other men in the village of his desire and a date and place was set. The men then went out to the garden of the man who initiated the party and helped him to pull up the tiabó roots. Direction was nominally in his hands and if many people took part, he would carry com-

476 siderable weight in deciding where to distribute the parti-
571 cipants along the stream. However, the usual small or medium sized party needed no central authority and the leader of the trip had very little to do except work along with the other men. His main function was to suggest the trip and to provide the tinhé.

[224] Hunting was a much more frequent pursuit and no initiative was needed. There was no hunt leader, but the sagacity and prestige of the man who was the best hunter was always recognized.

[714] Even ceremonies were held under the organization and leadership of the man who originated the plan. It was then his duty to send invitations to the other villages and to supervise certain preparations that had to be made in the village such as food accumulation and the collection of ceremonial paraphernalia.

Those men who initiated group activities were usually older men of some prestige. Frequently this would be the chief or a household head, but often it was any older man having good standing in the community. The Pumfurumé
157 were modest and retiring in personality. They were extroverts and loved to talk, gossip, and tell bawdy stories, but they were in no way forward or arrogant. However, certain
554 qualities gave prestige to those men possessing them. Among the most important were age, war prowess, learning, especially of the various songs, and hunting ability.

156 Authority was an unimportant concept in Pumfurumé life. It was seldom manifested within the political organi-

tion of the village and was kept at a minimum within the family. The forceful and dominant personality was definitely discouraged and, while respect was sought through warrior status and deep knowledge of Mundurucú lore, songs, and legends, nobody wished prestige as a mechanism to exert authority over others. It was assumed that the chief and the old men would express their opinions quietly and calmly and that the others would heed their counsel. However, a younger but respected man was also able to express himself to some effect. Controls were not rigid but they were sufficient to the needs of the culture. Cooperation was basic to the Mundurucú economy and the people were trained to it from an early age. There was an elaborate division of labor to be organized and interrelated to make a functional unit. The tasks performed for subsistence were the same that the Mundurucú had done for many generations and they were done in the same way. A solitary worker needs no directing hand nor does a group of people who are used to working as a unit. The economy did not call for elaborate political controls and the social organization certainly did not.

Disputes within the society were repressed. The average Mundurucú village contained its share of ill feeling and hostility, but the high interpersonal dependency made it expedient to suppress aggression. Thus, the most important functions of the village chief were to lead war parties, to provide at least a small degree of central orientation to the village and to symbolize the identity of the village as an autonomous unit with continuity to past and future.

Warfare

The greatest single interest of the Munduruú was warfare. It was waged continuously and successfully against all other tribes of a vast region until the beginning of the 20th century. Such was their reputation for unalloyed fierceness that the explorer Henri Coudreau remarked, "Les Munduruús ne pratiquent ni la justice, ni le duel, ni la guerre, mais seulement l'assassinat."[80] The range of their operations was enormous, especially when one considers that their war parties journeyed on foot. On the north, the Munduruú attacks reached the south bank of the Amazon between the mouth of the Tapajós River and the city of Óbidos. To the south, they terrified tribes on the headwaters of the eastern tributaries of the Tapajós River and the headwaters of the São Manoel and Juruena Rivers, well into the high Planalto de Mato Grosso. Tocantins claims that the Munduruú even knew the city of Cuiabá on the Paraguay River in Mato Grosso.[81] Munduruú attacks were felt as far east as the Tocantins River and west to the Tapajós and probably beyond. This would be an enormous range even for a mounted people but in a foot-going group it bespeaks a remarkable singularity of purpose and the expenditure of enormous time and energy.

We have already discussed the intervillage cooperation in warfare that made these extended sorties possible.

80. Coudreau, 1897, p. 148.

81. Tocantins, 1877, p. 98.

726 A campaign might start at the beginning of the dry season in one year and end at the end of the next dry season, a total of a year and a half in the field. During its course, several villages of different tribes might be attacked. The warriors sustained themselves principally by hunting, and the collection of wild foods.

721 The purpose of aboriginal Munduruku warfare was to secure trophy heads and to bring back captive children to adopt into the tribe. Wars were usually initiated by young men eager to gain war prowess and prestige by taking heads and captives. These young men would resolve among themselves to go to war and would then approach the chief to ask him to lead them. If the chief and the older men approved of the project, the chief took over the organization of the party. 208 Invitations were sent to other villages via a messenger who 724 belonged to the Muehacha'arpen, a society of older, valiant 578 warriors having an intimate knowledge of certain songs. On 574 his route, the muehacha carried a special trumpet known as the pay, on which he gave a distinctive signal when just outside one of the villages to be invited. A muehacha of that village gave an answering signal and then went out to meet him. Upon their encounter they played a song of the society on their trumpets and danced slowly back and forth towards each other. They then proceeded to the men's house where the messenger, in front of the assembled warriors, addressed an invitation to join in the war. The two most distinguished chiefs of the participating villages assumed

725 the leadership of the party, but the other chiefs were influential, also.

726 The warriors who accepted the invitation then busied themselves in making an enormous number of arrows, bows, and fresh bow strings. The warrior usually was accompanied by his wife or a female relative who carried hammocks and utensils, and with the other accompanying women, prepared food. The warrior carried only his arms and confined himself to hunting and scouting. The party moved slowly as it was necessary to procure subsistence and to scout the territory ahead. When the enemy village was neared, a temporary shelter was made in the forest and the women left there. The men then proceeded under cover of darkness to surround the village. At the first signs of dawn the warriors were already assembled in the forest on the village perimeter and the chief gave the signal to attack. The signal was sounded by two <u>murhaybe</u> on their special war trumpets. Arrows, the points of which had been coated with resin, were ignited and launched into the roofs of the houses, and the warriors charged into the village making as much noise as possible to confuse and terrify the inhabitants. As the latter ran from their houses and attempted to escape they were seized by the Mundurucú.

727 Men and women were slain and decapitated while the children were taken captive. Loot was confined to a small amount of arms and ornaments that had more trophy value than anything else. Surprise was the major element in the attack and the Mundurucú always retired before the enemy had the opportunity to regroup and inflict losses on them. They retreated rapidly

to their temporary shelters to pick up the women and their belongings and proceeded on a forced march until safety was reached, usually after a large river had been put between them and the enemy. If any of their own number was killed or too seriously wounded to keep up with the party, the member of the opposite society who had the privilege of burying his stopped long enough to cut off the upper arm of the fallen one, even if he was still alive. Needless to say, death came quickly to the wounded subjected to this operation. The arm bones were brought back to the village flayed of their flesh and after a suitable mourning period were buried.

The trophy heads were prepared en route. The retreating party stopped long enough to preserve the head by cleaning out the brains, boiling it slightly, and drying it over a fire. This process was repeated about three or four times. The head was not shrunken.

The return of the war party to their villages was an occasion of great rejoicing for those who remained behind, but one of sadness for the close relatives of the fallen. The warriors announced their return by blasts on [illegible] a type of trumpet called the shoo and were met by the older boys of the village. The captive children were turned over to the boys to be guarded and the warriors triumphantly entered the village. The children were adopted by their captors, tattooed, and eventually became fearless warriors and wives, themselves. According to informants, these people taken as captives were given full status within the tribe

727 and were so successfully incorporated that there were never any cases of defection, even in wars upon their native villages.

564 786 727 The greatest honor went to the man who had taken heads. They were referred to as dakhoighi, or, literally translated, "mother of the game." Such was their distinction that they were usually addressed by the short form title ahhoi. Prescriptions were relatively rare in Mundurucú culture, but a very elaborate series of taboos was observed by the trophy head owner and his wife. For a period of three years after his return he was not allowed intercourse with his wife, and he was not even supposed to look at other women. He spoke to the men only when necessary and avoided familiar contact with them. He did not hunt, but went into the forest at a distance from the hunting party and after the first kill returned to the village. His presence brought the magical charm of the head into the forest and made the animals fall an easy prey to the arrows of the hunters. The Mundurucú still say that in the days when the men's house had enemy heads in it there was a lot more food in the village.

[78]

During this period, certain taboos were observed by the wife of the trophy head owner. She did no household work, and she could not bathe in the stream. In general, she held herself aloof from the other women. She was aided at all times by a woman of the other moiety who acted as a servant to her. During three successive winters, the trophy

564 727

[516] head owner was responsible for holding ceremonies centering around the enemy heads. These ceremonies were participated in by people from many villages. After a successful
[527] expedition, a number of villages might hold these ceremonies, thus involving a great deal of intervillage visiting. Cane, beiju, and non-alcoholic vegetable and fruit drinks were
[579] steamed to feed the visitors. In the first ceremony of the cycle the trophy head was decorated by stringing cords through the mouth and out of the nostrils via a hole in the roof of the mouth, attaching brightly colored feathers to the ears, and affixing jaco teeth over the eye sockets. On the second occasion, the skin was taken from the skull and it was hung in a corner of the man's house, and on the third and last, the teeth of the trophy head, which had been removed immediately after the attack, were strung on a belt of woven cotton. A great dance was then held by the Jarurp-
[577] [illegible] (literally, "sisters of the arrow"), a singing society to which most of the Munduruku males belonged. After this ceremony, the trophy head owner and his wife [illegible].

[554] The highest honor achievable for a Munduruku man was to become a Muthaiba, or one of the society of learned and distinguished warriors. All members of this society had at one time taken a head and all were founts of Munduruku learning, especially of the all-important songs. The greatest chiefs and war leaders were members and such membership did much to enhance the chief's prestige. Below the status of the muthaiba was that of the trophy head owner (daiebatabi).

554 In addition to the glory of being an owner of a head, he was a valuable economic asset due to the charm that the head exerted over game.

726 422 Warfare was an occasion upon which the position of the chief became of great importance. The young warriors depended heavily on his experience and leadership. His authority was not unlimited, but it was more fully exercised and more necessary to successful results than during any peaceful endeavor in the village.

726 191 This is only a brief sketch of Munduruc warfare for its complexity rivaled the war patterns of the North American Plains Indians. To the Munduruc, themselves, it was the most important single pursuit and characterized their way of life more than any other activity. Its results were extremely destructive to other tribes but was a source of élan and vitality in Munduruc culture.

Religion

771 The following discussion of Munduruc religion will be brief and will touch mainly on those points pertinent to the problem of [illegible]. In conformity with Tropical Forest patterns, the religious system was of great simplicity. There were the typical Tupian spirits of animal, fish, and plant species, souls of the dead and certain malignant spirits.[22] Magic was simple and usually directed towards antisocial ends. The only specialist was the shaman. All the males participated in the ceremonials

22. cf. Wagley and Galvão, 1949, pp. 108-109; Oberg, 1953, pp. 53-4.

771 to a degree that varied slightly with their ceremonial knowledge.

775 Spirits

[778] The Munduruc spirits consisted of three rough classes. These were souls of the dead, spirit "mothers" of animals, fish, and plant species, and a variety of malignant beings. The soul was known as the Ibimbok, which also means shadow and image, and lived after death in the land of the sky, which was a hemispherical dome placed over a flat earth. The afterworld was a pleasant place where there were Munduruc villages and the old Munduruc culture was active. The souls of the dead were not dangerous and remained aloof from human society with the exception of that of the sorcerer which had to be destroyed after he was killed. Otherwise, the only time that the soul was malignant was when a very sick person lost his soul during sleep or a coma. The soul wandered abroad and tried to rob the souls of sleeping people. The Munduruc distinguished the "real" soul (Ibimbok), which was located in the center of the back, from the Ibimbok which was the reflection or the shadow of the [illegible]. The latter persisted after death also and, under circumstances to be discussed later, could roam the world as a certain type of evil spirit.

Souls could also be lost through offending the spirit "mother" of a game animal. The spirit "mother" rubbed the soul and passed it from one game animal to another and finally through all the species of fish. This journey of

775 the soul was very serious for there were a number of dangers along the path that could destroy the soul and consequently kill the sick person who had lost it. A special ceremony was immediately performed to get the soul back, for the person became sicker as his soul traveled further, and when the end of the journey was reached the person died. It was necessary to recover the soul before it reached the final and fatal point when it was taken away by the smallest fishes. Game animals also had souls and when an animal died its soul returned to the "land of the game" where it lived on in human form.

776 825 The most important class of spirits was that of the "mothers" of the species. Of these, the putchashi (mother of game) was the spirit owner of all game animals, collectively, and the most important of all these spirits. The "mother of game" existed in two forms: a wandering type that traveled within the bodies of certain game animals, especially the land tortoise, and the "real" "mother of game" which had the form of a stone and could only be seen by the shaman. This type was usually found in the springs and deep, cool pools at the headwaters of streams. These are places where game is usually to be found due to the constant supply of water and the [illegible] vegetation this feed. However, they also say that the game is here because it is attracted by the "mother of the game."

The "mothers" of the different species of game were of less importance, but could be equally dangerous when

offended. These spirit owners were angered when a hunter killed an animal just for its hide and left the meat to rot, when someone ridiculed the game, when the spirit "mothers" were not "fed" by the shaman both privately and at ceremonies, and for a variety of lesser reasons. They took revenge by robbing the soul of the malefactor or causing him to have some accident.

Species of fish also had spirit "mothers," but these were of minor importance. There was also a "mother of fishes" which could be found in occasional alligators. As with all of the spirit "mothers" that resided in animals, only a shaman could detect in which particular animal it was located. In ancient times there used to be a "mother of birds," say the Munduruc, but a sorcerer buried her deep in the ground and she is still alive but can never get out. Wild trees of importance to subsistence had "mothers" too but these were rarely referred to by the Munduruc. The general "mother of the game" and the species "mothers" of the larger game animals were those that figured most heavily in the ceremonial life.

The malignant spirits were an important factor in the Munduruc belief system for they persist in Munduruc culture despite the decline of the rest of the native religion. In common with the Tupian tribes and the Jabuticas, the Munduruc believed in the evil spirit known as

776 Yurupari.[23] It was a spirit that only attacked at night and appeared to people in the guise of a human. If one came within range, it threw a malignant object "like a stone" at the unwary person and this stone caused illness and possible death. The Yurupari could walk on land, but it often flew through the air making a thin whistling sound in its progress. There were two types of Yurupari. One consisted of fresh water dolphins that traveled at night as Yurupari and the other were the real Yurupari that dwelled in the land of the Yurupari from where they made sorties against humans. Of all the evil spirits that preyed on the Mundurucú, this one was most dangerous.

It was mentioned previously that a person's shadow, as distinguished from his true soul, could take evil form after the death of its owner. This "shadow" turned into the ashik, a very tiny person that could only be seen vaguely and fleetingly by living humans. Only the ashik that were the shadows of girls who died when still small were dangerous, for they stole the souls of infants. Just as the little girl used to reach for the babies pleading, "Come here," so did her ashik take the souls of the children. The mother resorted to magical charms to guard her children against it.

777 23. Métraux points out that the Yurupari was originally a Tupinamba supernatural which was adopted by the Jesuits to signify the Christian Satan, and which has been ascribed various qualities in its diffusion throughout the Amazon. (Métraux, 1928, pp. 58-60.) It is possible that its origin, or, at least some of its qualities, among the Mundurucú may be attributed to caboclo influence.

754 The most common affliction of the supernatural was [753] *caushi*. The *caushi* was not a spirit but an object carved to a certain form by a sorcerer, given malignant animation by him, and sent sometimes against certain people, but usually against anyone that it might encounter. All illness was caused by *caushi* and, therefore, ultimately by witchcraft.

756 **Shamanism**

The chief function of the Munduruca shaman was curing. Among his other duties was the ceremonial one of guarding the people against the attacks of *Turunerí* during certain rites. He was also responsible for putting in a deep sleep by a magical spell the people of a village about to be attacked and for feeding the spirit "mothers" of the game.

The power of shamanism was hereditary in the patrilineal line and present since birth. All the children of a shaman, including daughters, possessed the power, but, today, the women do not practice any more. In the aboriginal culture, female shamans had only a few specific ceremonial functions and did not cure. [757] Curing was done by the common practice of blowing smoke on the sick person and then extracting the evil object, or *caushi*, by massage and suction. The shaman then prescribed certain herbs and roots applied externally or drunk mixed with water that were supposed to 756 heal the internal damage done by the evil object. During 276 the cure, the shaman smoked a large cigarette to generate the necessary curative smoke, but he did not inhale in large enough quantities to produce tobacco narcosis as do the

754 [274] Tenetehara and Tapirapé shamans.[24] This was done only when the shaman "traveled" to find the "mother of the game" in order to feed her. The shaman performed his services free of charge and was in no way liberated from the work of the men. He enjoyed prestige due to his position as a curer and also due to fear of him as a potential sorcerer.

754 Only the shaman had the sorcerer's power. Others could learn the effective techniques, but they were not able to launch the evil object into the air or endow it with its malignant force. He was also capable of turning himself into a jaguar and creating other jaguars that he sent against people. The penalty for sorcery was death. This severity is explained by the Munduruçú, who say "If we had no sorcerers there would be no sickness and people would not die so fast. So we have to kill them." At present, only men practice shamanism and are recognized as being dangerous and only men are killed as sorcerers, but Tocantins mentions three cases of women accused of witchcraft in the latter part of the nineteenth century.[25]

755 All sickness and death were believed to be caused by sorcery, but it was only when a few people died that a powerful shaman was asked to detect the sorcerer. Only [illegible] the shaman is able to see everything." The shaman might not [illegible] tell the

24. Wagley, 1942.

25. Tocantins, 1877, pp. 109-111.

54 residents of the afflicted village who was the guilty party, but after the illness became serious he informed them and they took the decision as a group to kill the accused. His closer relatives were not informed of these plans, but they made no attempt to avenge his death in the face of the community imposed punishment. Most executions were carried out by the suspect's fellow villagers, but this was not invariably the case. Close relatives of persons supposedly bewitched could be suspected, but this was not generally the case, for the Mundurucú sorcerer is said to usually release his evil objects (*caxibi*) or *jaguars* against anyone that they may encounter. The only explanation for such generalized malice is that "the sorcerer is angry at everything."

Ceremonies

76 In addition to the ceremonies that centered around the trophy head, two ceremonies, both of which can be referred to as "Festival of the Dead," were devoted to the spirit "mothers" as a means of maintaining their good will and thus insuring better hunting. One of these, the *Arakerai*, was held only every three to five years and only in one village at a time, as nearly the whole rainy season was consumed by the festivities. This ceremony was celebrated in a short form that lasted only ten days and which was known as the [illegible]. It occurred almost [illegible] *Arakerais* and shifted its location from village to village every year. Hundreds of visitors from villages all over

796 Mundurucania used to attend, and hunting parties scoured the nearby forests to maintain the enlarged village population during the ceremonies. A feature of both rites was ceremonial imitations of the various beasts by the male participants. The imitation of the tapir could only be done by a society known as the biushi (mothers of the tapir). Members of this society were recruited by ceremonial capture by biushi of the opposite society. The ceremonies were held at the initiative of one of the older men of the village, often, but not necessarily, the chief. This man acted as leader and organizer of the ceremony, but he was aided in the necessary preparations by all the village.

796 778 539 The above ceremonies were centered in the men's house. The men's house was also central to those rites involving the sacred trumpets. When a new men's house was built, the trumpets were shifted under cover of darkness from the old house to the new in a procession accompanied by the sacred flutes of other villages and the male visitors. The women remained confined to their houses and cried in memory of the fact that, according to legend, the trumpets and the men's house once belonged to them. Much the same procedure was followed when new trumpets were installed. The trumpets were made in secrecy in a secluded part of the forest and brought to the village to a similar affair [illegible]. One ritual so frequent in occurrence as not to warrant classification as a ceremony was the feeding and playing of the

796 flutes. Before every communal meal taken in the men's house,
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534 the man who carried out the food had to bring a portion into the trumpet chamber and place the food vessel against the mouth of the trumpets saying, "Here is your food, old people. Eat and give us luck in the hunt." In order to further maintain the good will of the trumpets, they had to be played occasionally. Three players at a time performed this duty, but, since the playing lasted from afternoon until far into the night, they were relieved by other men. At least once a year, the flutes had to be served a feast of sweet manioc drink and played from afternoon until dawn of the next day. This ritual playing of the sacred trumpets was one of the few group religious activities that involved just the people of a single village.

796 The other ceremony to which outsiders did not need
775 to be invited was the curing rite to recover a lost soul. This involved three shamans and two men who knew the proper songs and who sang to each of the species "mothers" to return the soul. This resembles prayer, but in reality the songs were magical formulas that compelled the spirit to return the wandering soul.

796 All Munduruc religious ceremonies were male dom-
542 inated. Women served only as observers and were able to participate at times in a play capacity only, except for one or two occasions in which female shamans took part. Parts
796 542 of some ceremonies were forbidden to female eyes. There was
535 one secular dance in which women participated, but to a

796 lesser degree, for the men led the dance and played the in-
562 struments. This was a circle dance in which animals, birds,
535 and fish were imitated and, although greatly enjoyed, had no religious significance.

[pp 70- end, not processed]